Windermere Primary School
Attendance Policy

Date of Issue: 21st February 2023

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body no less than every three years. The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body on

Signature: ……*S Gilliver*………. Headteacher   Date: …21st February 2023…………

Signature: ………*J Perry*……..…. Chair of Governors   Date: …21st February 2023………….

Policy is due for review in February 2026.

Introduction

At Windermere Primary School, we are committed to promoting high standards of attendance and punctuality. We believe that children cannot learn if they are absent from school. Therefore, we aim to ensure that all our pupils take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and will strive to raise standards by promoting the regular attendance and punctuality of our pupils. This policy aims to support us all to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

Windermere Primary School aims to:
- demonstrate that improving attendance is everyone's business and embed a 'support first' approach.
- develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance and is an integral part of the school's ethos.
- work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.
- reduce Persistent Absence in order that all pupils are assisted in reaching their potential.

The graphic below illustrates the amount of days/hours of learning lost where attendance is less than 'good'.

Attendance Ladder

Equates to:

100%	PERFECTION
4 SCHOOL DAYS off each year — 98%	IMPRESSIVE
7 SCHOOL DAYS off each year — 96%	GOOD
9 SCHOOL DAYS off each year — 95%	NEARLY THERE
11 SCHOOL DAYS off each year — 94%	NEEDS TO IMPROVE
20 SCHOOL DAYS off each year — 90%	CONCERNS (referred to Educational Welfare / Persistent absentee)
30 SCHOOL DAYS off each year — 85%	SERIOUS CONCERNS

Encouraging Good Attendance

The school encourages good attendance by:

- Awarding a weekly, termly and annual trophy to the class with the best overall attendance.
- publicising good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and the termly report to the Governing Body.
- Offering other school incentives to celebrate good attendance including golden time or additional play
- Keeping parents informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance and absence record

Punctuality

- Breakfast Club opens at 7:45am
- Classroom doors open at 8:45am and close at 8:55am
- The register will be open for no longer than 20 minutes
- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed at 9:15am and parent provides a satisfactory explanation will be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session.
- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed and parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session (Code U).
- School may arrange a meeting with parents to discuss concerns so that the problem can be addressed.

Absence

Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence.

If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered – or when no explanation is forthcoming at all – the absence will be treated as unauthorised and the parent informed.

- Leave of absence can be applied for in advance. It is the school's decision as to whether this is granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application (parents cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence).
- Leave of absence to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 © for which a child performance licence has been issued. HCC will not issue a child performance licence where absence is required without the written permission of the Headteacher.

Responsibilities and Expectations

Expectations of Parents/carers.
Parents/carers are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

- Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school every day school is open.

Parents are responsible for:
- ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance.
- instilling in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- impressing upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct.
- informing the school on the **first day** of absence, by **9.30am** at the latest.
- Maintaining **daily** contact with the school until their child returns to school
- providing the school with an explanation for the absence.
- informing the school of any changes to their contact details.
- taking an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parent's evenings and other relevant meetings.
- working in partnership with the school to resolve issues and help the school to understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- proactively engage with the support offered by school to prevent the need for more formal support.
- If formal support is needed, proactively engage with this support to prevent the need for any legal intervention.
- booking any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- only requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance. A holiday during term time is not an exceptional circumstance.
- treating staff with respect
- actively supporting the work of the school
- calling staff for help when they need it
- communicating as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support

Expectations of pupils
All pupils are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually.

Expectations of the School
Responsibilities of the Headteacher

- Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for attendance.
- Ensuring accurate completion of admission and attendance registers.
- Ensuring staff are actively working to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual pupils and the pupil body as a whole.
- Having clear processes in place to address persistent and severe absence

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- Ensuring that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness.
- Monitoring and analysing data and trends.
- Reporting to the Governing Body and Trusts the attendance figures and progress to achieving the set targets.
- Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.
- Building and modelling respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement. Making sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Open and honest communication with staff, pupils and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- Liaising with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- Sharing information on and working collaboratively with other schools in the area, LA's and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming severe or persistent.
- Ensuring the school attendance policy is applied fairly and consistently and recognises the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance.
- Ensuring all staff members:

  ➢ treat pupils with dignity
  ➢ build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries
  ➢ take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively
  ➢ understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity.
  ➢ communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being
  ➢ deliver clear messages about expectations, routines and consequences to new pupils and families through prospectus and admission/transition events
  ➢ use physical presence to reinforce routines and expectations on arrival and departure
  ➢ regularly communicate expectations for attendance and punctuality and school performance through regular channels of communication with staff, pupils and parents

- Monitoring of whole school data regularly to identify reasons for absence, patterns, attendance of particular groups and the impact of interventions
- Establishing and ensuring implementation and robust monitoring of arrangements to identify, report and support children missing education (CME) or at risk of becoming CME

- Ensuring compliance with guidance regarding Children Missing Education - see Herts Grid https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/children-missing-from-education

Teaching staff

Teachers are responsible for:

- Ensuring the effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by setting an example of punctuality and good attendance.
- Ensuring that the registers are taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and are accurate and up to-date;
- Reviewing class and individual attendance patterns;
- Informing the school attendance champion/line manager of any concerns;
- Emphasising with pupils the importance of punctuality and good attendance.
- Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy. Making sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Communicating openly and honestly with staff, pupils and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- Holding regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Liaising with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- Modeling respectful relationships and appropriate communication for staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture. All staff members should:

  - treat pupils with dignity
  - build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries
  - take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence handling confidential information sensitively
  - understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity
  - communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being

- Welcome pupils back following an absence and provide good catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.

Attendance Officers (Admin staff recording attendance)
- To ensure robust day-to-day processes are in place.
- To track and follow up absence and poor punctuality
- Carry out robust first day calling procedures including priority routines for vulnerable children including children with a social worker. If absence continues without explanation, further contact should be made to ensure safeguarding.
- Identify any absences that are not explained for each session and contact parents to understand why and when the pupil will return.

- Where absences are recorded as unexplained in the attendance register the correct code should be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Where reasonably possible, ensure school holds more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.
- Engage with feeder schools or organisations to access absence information in order to identify target cohorts prior to transfer, including mid-year transfers and managed moves.

Working with the Local Authority
- Our school works in partnership with the Statutory Attendance & Participation Team to devise a strategic approach to attendance.
- The Headteacher or Attendance Champion (SLT) will meet with the link LAAO when required to discuss and improve attendance for all persistently absent or severely absent pupils.
- Action Plans will be developed for all persistently and severely absent pupils. The school may request support from the LAAO for advice and guidance with the implementation of these action plans.
- If parents do not proactively engage with support offered through the action plan, then formal intervention may be requested from the LAAO.
- If parents do not engage with formal support, the school may request statutory intervention from the Local Authority.
- Statutory intervention can include:
  - Parenting Contract
  - Fixed Penalty Notice application from school
  - Parenting Order
  - Education Supervision Order
  - Prosecution

Pupils at risk of Persistent Absence

School is expected to:

- proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Signpost and support parents to access any required services where out of school barriers are identified.
- If the issue persists, take an active part in a multi-agency effort with the Local Authority and other partners.
- Act as the Lead Practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service.
- Where the Lead Practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the Local Authority and partners.

Pupils who are Persistently Absent

Persistent absence occurs when a child's attendance is at or falls below 90%. Absenteeism at this level will considerably damage a pupil's educational prospects and the school will work alongside parents/carers to tackle this issue.

School is expected to:

- Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent.
- Ensure additional targeted support is in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.
- If there is lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents, being clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
- Where support is not working or being engaged with, work with the Local Authority on legal intervention.
- If there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.
- Work with other local schools, such as schools previously attended or schools of siblings.

Pupils who are Severely Absent
Severe absence occurs when a child's attendance is at or falls below 50%.
School is expected to:

- Continue support as for pupils who are persistently absent.
- Agree a joint approach for all pupils who are severely absent with the Local Authority.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Our school follows Hertfordshire County Council's Penalty Notice for Truancy Code of Conduct and procedures.

- We expect parents/carers to work with us to address attendance problems.
- If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day= 1 session) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term (including unauthorised holidays), the Head Teacher may ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice.
- The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days.
- There is no right of appeal by parents against a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- If the penalty is not paid the Local Authority may prosecute parents/carers for their child's irregular attendance.

Part-time Timetables

- As part of the framework for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after, and care leavers (Ofsted June 2015) local authorities are required to provide detailed data on school age children in their area who are not in receipt of full-time education and schools are similarly expected to maintain data on students of compulsory school age who are on their roll but attending on a part-time timetable.
- The Local authority has published guidance for all maintained school, academies, free schools, studio schools, UTCs, ESCs and PSBs on the use of part-time timetables for pupils of compulsory school age (the term after their fifth birthday to the last Friday in June following their 16th birthday)

- All schools are required to return information on children who are on part-time tables within five days of the pupil starting or ending a part-time timetable.

Monitoring and review

Governors will:
- Offer a clear vision for high attendance, underpinned by high expectations and core values, which are communicated to and understood by staff, pupils and families.
- Regularly review and understand attendance data, discussing and challenging trends and helping school leaders to focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it the most within school.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Make sure staff, pupils and families understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe.
- Expect good attendance and punctuality from all members of the school community and make sure that pupils understand its importance.
- Convey clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes. Empower staff to take responsibility for attendance.
- Recognise attendance as an important area of school improvement. Make sure it is resourced appropriately (including through effective use of pupil premium funding) to create, build and maintain systems and performance.
- Have a designated attendance champion in the senior leadership team with clearly assigned responsibilities which are identified within the attendance policy, escalation of procedures and school improvement plan.
- Make sure staff receive training/professional development and support to deploy attendance systems effectively.
- Review policy and practice to ensure consistency.

Date Approved: 21st February 2023

Review Date: February 2026

Headteacher: S Gilliver

Chair of Governors: J Perry

Appendices:
1. **Links**

Appendix 1

Links

Statutory guidance

- School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures
- Children missing education
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school
- Keeping children safe in education
- School exclusion

Guidance and resources

- National statistics: Pupil absence in schools in England